



# **An Introduction to WASC Senior College & University Commission (WSCUC)**

Presented to California Acupuncture Board

September 12, 2014

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# OUTCOMES

At the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Answer “What is WSCUC?” (and how do you say it???)
- Differentiate between regional, national, and programmatic accreditation
- Describe WSCUC’s Standards of Accreditation
- Articulate how to become WSCUC accredited, and why

# AGENDA

- About WSCUC
- Types of Accreditation
- WSCUC Standards
- How to become WSCUC accredited
- Questions & Answers



# ABOUT WSCUC

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## Three Core Commitments:

1. Student Learning & Success
2. Quality & Improvement
3. Institutional Integrity, Sustainability, & Accountability

### WSCUC's Mission

- A **regional** accrediting agency serving a diverse membership of public and private higher education institutions throughout California, Hawaii, and the Pacific as well as a limited number of institutions outside the U.S.
- Through its work of **peer review**, based on **standards** agreed to by the membership, the Commission encourages **continuous institutional improvement** and assures the membership and its constituencies, including the public, that accredited institutions are **fulfilling their missions in service to their students and the public good**.
- Recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as certifying **institutional eligibility** for federal funding in a number of programs, including student access to federal financial aid.

# WSCUC COMMISSIONERS

- 27 volunteer members
- Nominated and voted upon by the heads of member institutions
- Represent the region and the general public
- Meet three times a year



# WSCUC INSTITUTIONS

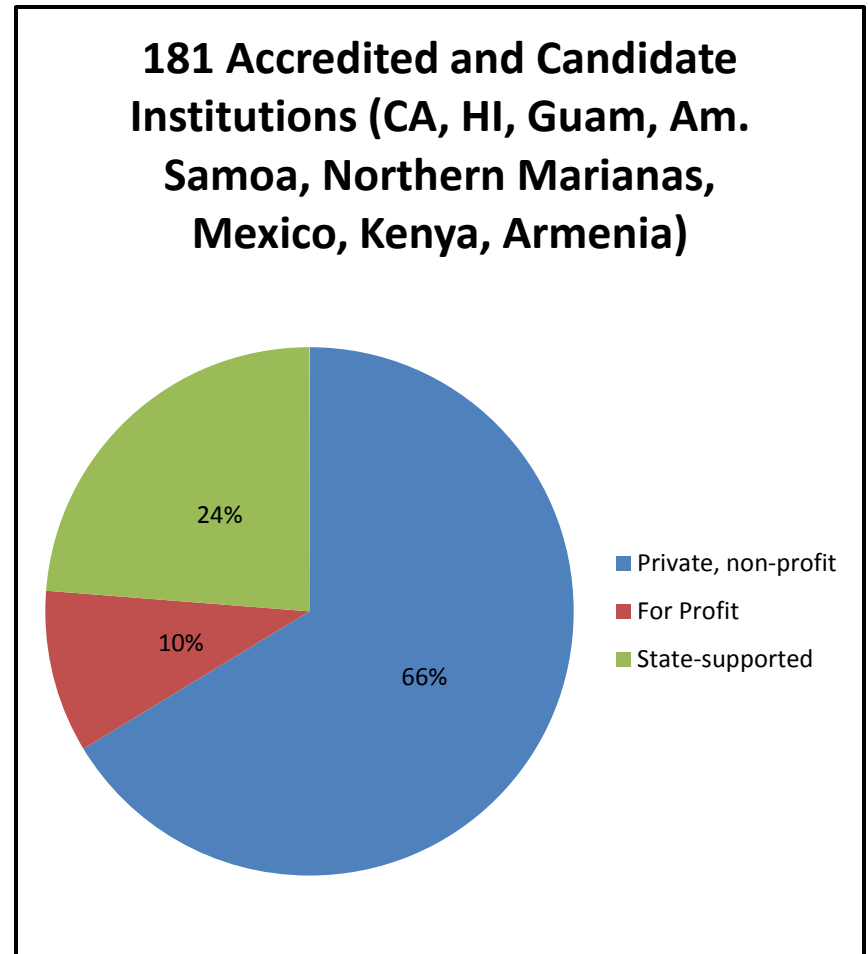


- Public / Private
- Non-profit / For profit
- On ground / Online
- Secular / Faith-based
- General / Specialized
- Large / Small
- Old / New

# WSCUC INSTITUTIONS

## WSCUC Institutions:

- 169 accredited institutions
- 12 in Candidacy
- 23 institutions in eligibility
- 1,000,000+ students
- Variety of missions, programs and institutional types





# WSCUC's Institutions Offering Acupuncture Programs

- Southern California University of Health Sciences: Accredited since 1993 (Reaffirmation scheduled for Spring 2017)
- Pacific College of Oriental Medicine: Candidate (Granted Candidacy in 2013; 4th visit this fall for Seeking Accreditation)



# TYPES OF ACCREDITATION

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## WSCUC IS:

- **REGIONAL** – defined by location (CA, HI, and Pacific Islands)
- **INSTITUTIONAL** – focused on the institution as a whole, not on any specific degree programs
- **SENIOR COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES** – focused on institutions that offer baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral degrees
- **RECOGNIZED** – by U.S. Department of Education

**NATIONAL:** also institutionally focused, but not defined by location

- Faith-related
- Career-related
  - **ACICS** is the largest national accrediting organization of degree granting institutions, accrediting professional, technical and occupational programs. Recognized by U.S. Department of Education.

**PROGRAMMATIC:** focused on assuring quality of specific programs or professions

- **ACAOM** - national accrediting agency of first-professional master's degree and professional master's-level certificate and diploma programs in acupuncture and Oriental medicine, and professional post-graduate doctoral programs in acupuncture and in Oriental medicine (DAOM), as well as freestanding institutions and colleges of acupuncture and Oriental medicine that offer such programs. Recognized by U.S. Department of Education.

# REGIONAL ACCREDITATION

- Accreditation of the entire institution, not of its individual degree programs or schools
- Quality assurance for the stability and strength of all levels of the organization
- Non-governmental agency (though as a “gate-keeper” for receiving federal funds)
- Peer review: Trained volunteer educators drawing conclusions about academic quality and institutional effectiveness
- Each agency has its own standards and procedures with some shared commonality.



# 2013 STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION

# CORE COMMITMENTS

1. Student Learning & Success
2. Quality & Improvement
3. Institutional Integrity, Sustainability, & Accountability

# WSCUC 2013 Standards of Accreditation

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- Standard 1
- Standard 2
- Standard 3
- Standard 4

## **Standard 1:**

### **Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives**

- *Institutional Purpose*
- *Integrity and Transparency*

## **Standard 2:**

### **Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions**

- *Teaching and Learning*
- *Scholarship and Creative Activity*
- *Student Learning and Success*



## **Standard 3:**

### **Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability**

- *Faculty and Staff*
- *Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources*
- *Organizational Structures and Decision-making Processes*

## **Standard 4:**

### **Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement**

- *Quality Assurance Processes*
- *Institutional Learning and Improvement*

# Criteria for Review (CFR)

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*Criteria  
for  
Review*

- Provide statements about the meaning of the Standard
- Are cited by institutions in their report, by teams in evaluating institutions, and by the Commission in making decisions



# HOW TO BECOME ACCREDITED

# Becoming Accredited: Overview

- Formal procedures by which institutions move through required stages that can lead to accreditation:
  1. Eligibility
  2. Initial Accreditation  
(If Initial Accreditation is not achieved after the Seeking Accreditation, Visit 1, Candidacy may be granted.)
- Each stage has specific criteria, processes, and time frames.
  - The time frame may take several years depending on the maturity of institutional development.

# STAGE 1: Becoming Eligible

- Institutions interested in obtaining WSCUC accreditation are first reviewed to determine if they are eligible to pursue accreditation.
- Application for Eligibility is guided by 16 Eligibility Criteria that anticipate the WSCUC Standards.

# 16 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

## Section 1: Institutional Context

1. Authority
2. Operational Status
3. Public Information
4. Relations with Commission
5. Academic and Transfer Credit

## Section 2: Institutional Mission & Planning

6. Mission and Policies
7. Governance and Administration
8. Financial Resources and Accountability
9. Institutional Planning

## Section 3: Educational Effectiveness and Student Success

10. Degree Programs
11. Educational Objectives / Assessment of Student Learning
12. General Education
13. Faculty
14. Student Success
15. Admissions
16. Information / Learning Resources

# STAGE 1: Becoming Eligible

Eligibility applications are peer-reviewed by the Eligibility Review Committee (ERC) to determine if institution:

- Fits within the scope of institutions which WSCUC would likely accredit in terms of type and scope;
- Meets each of the Eligibility criteria;
- Demonstrates sufficient resources (finances, leadership, constituent support, and depth of planning) to show promise of moving on to Initial Accreditation within the timeframes approved by the Commission.

# STAGE 2: Candidacy or Initial Accreditation

## AFTER ELIGIBILITY:

1. Institution applies for Initial Accreditation
2. Writes and submits Institutional Report
  - To demonstrate substantial compliance with *2013 Standards of Accreditation* and CFRs
  - Report also addresses:
    - Degree Programs: Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees
    - Educational Quality: Core Competencies, and Standards of Performance at Graduation, and
    - Sustainability: Preparing for the Changing Higher Education Environment.
3. Peer review team performs site visit and writes report
4. Commission Action
5. Next Steps



# STAGE 2: Candidacy or Initial Accreditation

## INITIAL ACCREDITATION

Institution demonstrates *substantial compliance* with all WSCUC 2013 *Standards of Accreditation* and their associated CFRs.

- Once an institution is found to be in *substantial* compliance, the visiting team can recommend Initial Accreditation for the Commission's consideration.

## CANDIDACY

Institution unable to demonstrate *substantial* compliance but at least *minimal compliance* after the first visit. At least one additional visit will be required.

- The focus of additional visits will be on only those Standards/CFRs that have been found to be in *minimal* compliance or non-compliance and other identified issues of concern to the Commission.

# MINIMAL COMPLIANCE

- Evidence of understanding the principles or intentions of each CFR at a sufficient level to support continued development
- Elementary or initial development and implementation of structures, processes, and forms that operationalize the CFRs
- Understanding of concepts held by key leaders but less well understood at all levels of the organization

# SUBSTANTIAL COMPLIANCE

- Core concepts or intent of the CFR understood and articulated clearly as it applies to relevant operations
- Thorough and widespread implementation of structures, processes, and forms that operationalize the CFRs
- Understanding of concepts held at multiple relevant organizational levels

# INITIAL ACCREDITATION

An institution achieves Initial Accreditation by demonstrating that it has:

1. Reviewed itself in reference to the *2013 Standards of Accreditation* and the Core Commitments.
2. Met all of the 2013 Standards/CFRs at a *substantial* level.
3. Successfully addressed any concerns identified in the letter granting Eligibility.
4. Created a robust system to analyze retention and graduation rates and identified strategies to make improvements.
5. Collected evidence of student learning and used the results for instructional improvement.
6. Developed resources to maintain long term financial sustainability.

# THEN WHAT?

Initial Accreditation is granted for 5 years.

Institution then goes through Institutional Review Process (outlined in *2013 Handbook*) for reaffirmation:

1. Institutional Report
2. Offsite Review (peer review)
3. Accreditation Visit (peer review)
4. Commission Action
5. Next Steps



**THANK YOU!**  
**QUESTIONS?**